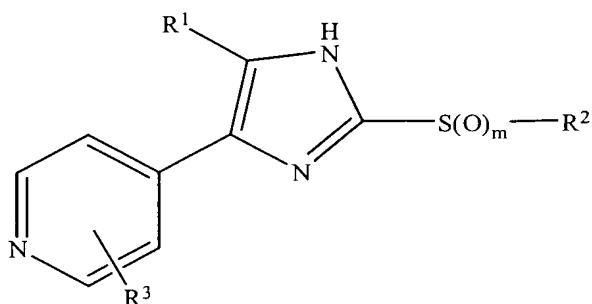


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound
 of the formula I



wherein

R^1 is aryl which may or may not be substituted by a halogen atom;

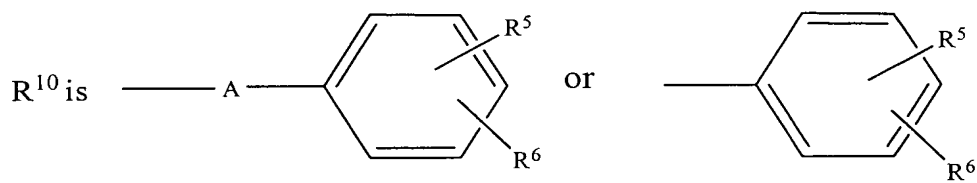
R^2 is selected from the group consisting of

- a) aryl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, and
- b) C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of

- a) NR^4R^{10}
- b) ~~NR^7COR^8~~ NR^7COR^{10} , and
- c) C_1 - C_6 -alkoxy;

R^4 is H;



or, if R^3 is NR^7COR^{10} , is R^8 ,

R^5 and R^6 , which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkoxy or C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^7 is H, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl or benzyl;

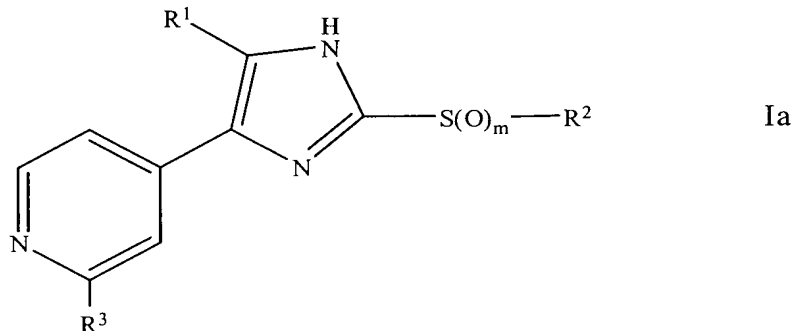
R^8 is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -cycloalkyl or phenyl, where the phenyl group may have one or two substituents independently of one another selected from the group consisting of C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy and halogen;

A is straight-chain or branched C_1 - C_6 -alkylene or C_2 - C_6 -alkenylene and

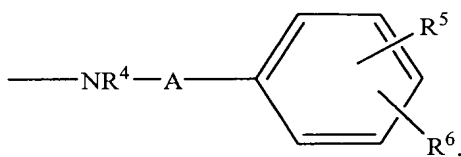
m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, which has the formula Ia:



Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R^3 is



Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is C₁-C₂-alkylene.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is ethylidene.

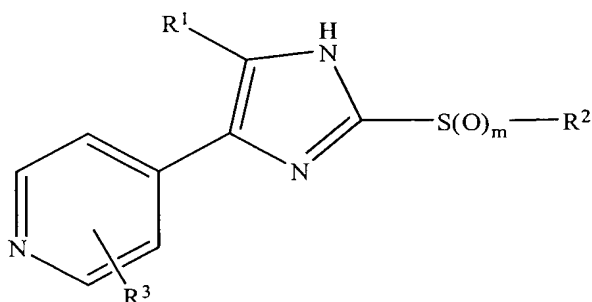
Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein R⁵ and R⁶ are H.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R¹ is 4-fluorophenyl.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 16, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which TNF- α and IL- β are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 16 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound of the formula I



wherein

R¹ is aryl which is substituted by a halogen atom or by halo-C₁-C₆-alkyl;

R² is selected from the group consisting of

- a) aryl-C₁-C₄-alkyl, and
- b) C₁-C₆-alkyl;

R³ is selected from the group consisting of

- a) NR⁴R¹⁰,
- b) NR⁷COR¹⁰,
- c) OR¹⁰, and
- d) NH₂;

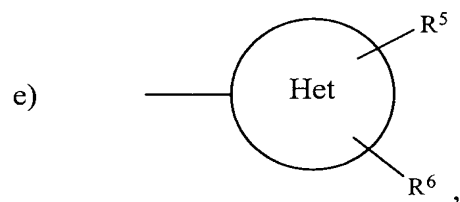
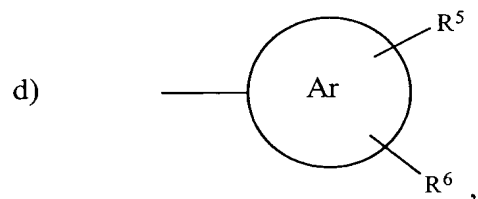
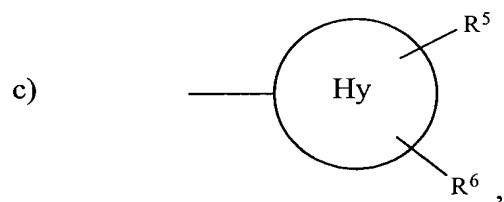
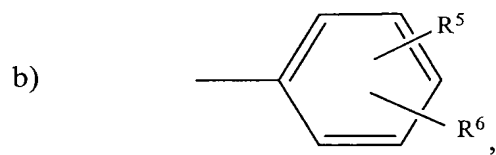
R⁴ is H, -COR¹⁴, -CO₂R¹⁴, -CONH₂, -CONHR¹⁴, -CHR¹⁶-OR¹⁴, -CHR¹⁶-O-COR¹⁴, -COC(R¹⁶)₂-OH, -COR¹⁵, SO₂R¹⁵ or -SO₂R¹⁴, R¹⁴ is C₁-C₆-alkyl or CF₃, R¹⁵ is phenyl or tolyl, and R¹⁶ is H or C₁-C₆-alkyl;

R⁵ and R⁶, which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C₁-C₆-alkoxy, C₁-C₆-alkyl or halo-C₁-C₆-alkyl;

R⁷ is H;

R¹⁰ has one of the meanings below:

- a) A — B,

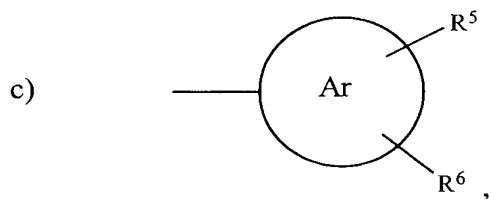
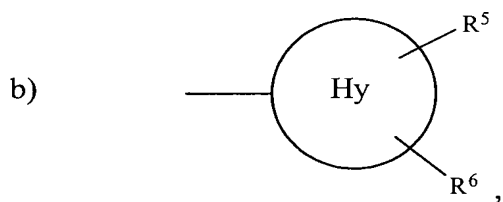


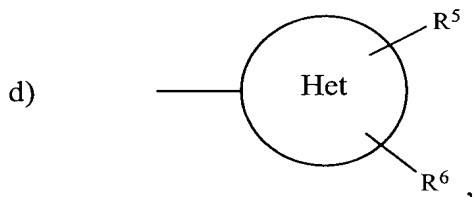
- f) C₁-C₆-alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or
 g) trifluoromethyl;

A is straight-chain or branched C₁-C₆-alkylene or C₂-C₆-alkenylene;

B is selected from the group consisting of

a) H,





e) OC₁-C₆-alkyl, and

f) OH;

Hy is a 3- to 10-membered non-aromatic mono-, bi- or tricyclic carbocycle which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

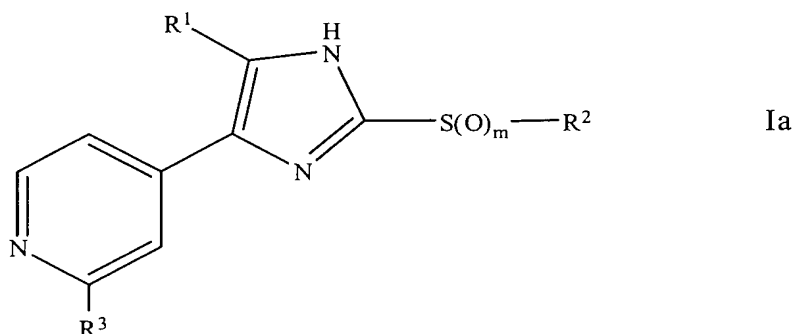
Ar is a 5- or 6-membered aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N and which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

Het is a 5- or 6-membered non-aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring and which may or may not be bridged bicyclically or tricyclically;

m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which has formula Ia:



Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} is A-B and B is selected from the group consisting of OC_1-C_6 -alkyl and OH.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^3 is NR^7COR^{10} , and R^{10} is selected from the group consisting of $-O-C_1-C_4$ -alkylphenyl, phenyl and C_2-C_6 -alkenyl which is substituted by phenyl.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is C_1-C_2 -alkylene.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is ethylidene.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^5 and R^6 are H.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^1 is halogen-substituted phenyl or CF_3 -substituted phenyl.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 25, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which $\text{TNF-}\alpha$ and $\text{IL-}\beta$ are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 25 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

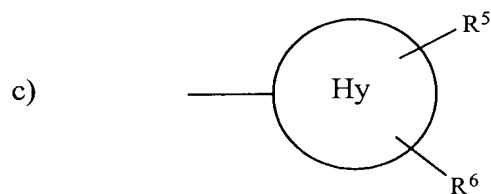
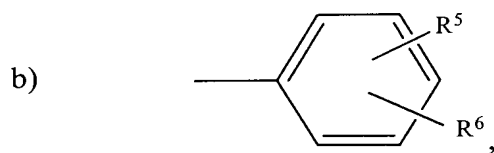
Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which is {4-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-2-methylsulfonyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl]-pyridin-2-yl}-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)amine.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 24, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 34, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 38 (New): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} has one of the meanings below:

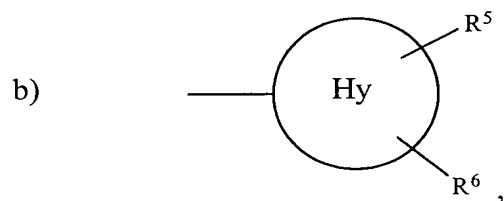
a) $\text{A} - \text{B}$,



- f) C_1-C_6 -alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or
- g) trifluoromethyl;

and when R^{10} is A-B, B is selected from the group consisting of

- a) H,



- e) OC_1-C_6 -alkyl, and
- f) OH.